

AN EXACT
REPRESENTATION
OF THE
Very uncandid and extraordinary Conduct
OF
Dr. John Coakley Lettson,
AS WELL PREVIOUS TO, AS ON, THE DAY OF
ELECTION FOR
Physician to the Finsbury Dispensary.

WITH SOME
REMARKS
On the Establishment of the
New Finsbury Dispensary.

By THOMAS SKEETE, M. D.

*Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee.* SHAKESP. HAMLET.

*I cannot tell
What heav'n hath giv'n him, let some graver eye
Pierce into that: but I can see his pride
Peep through each part of him.* SHAKESP. HEN. VIII.

L O N D O N:

Sold by J. FIELDING, Pater-noster Row, and at the New Finsbury Dispensary, St. John's-street, Clerkenwell. 1786.

•• The Profits of this Pamphlet will be appropriated to the Service of the New Dispensary, St. John's-Street, Clerkenwell.



OLD HICKORY 9D 1952

INTRODUCTION.

AS it is several weeks since I declared my intention, at a public meeting of the Subscribers of the Finsbury Dispensary, of making known the whole of the proceedings relative to the very extraordinary conduct of Dr. Lettsom, as well previous to, as on the day of election for a Physician to that Charity; and, as the persons more particularly interested in the contents of this Pamphlet, are sufficiently aware of the design of it, any explanation or preface on the subject may, perhaps, appear unnecessary. I must request, however, to be indulged with a few words.

Nothing can be more disagreeable to my feelings than to appear before the public in a controversy of this kind. I sincerely regret the necessity of it, but I could not persuade myself to permit a man in a public situation, and in the practice of a liberal profession, to be guilty of the most unwarrantable duplicity and indelicacy of conduct, without exposing it. It appeared so very inconsistent with the good order and government of the society of Quakers, that any one of their body should officiously intrude himself into the concerns of others, and, in order to render himself conspicuous, encourage opposition and contest, under the pretences of charity and humanity, that I determined to represent the affair to the public, hoping that it may serve as a lesson in future, and that others may experience a greater consistency of conduct from Dr. Lettsom, than I have done.—I was thoroughly satisfied

tified that real charity does not exist in an ostentatious display of every guinea bestowed ; and, lastly, I was willing to reprobate one, among the various contrivances or means by which an attempt is made to impress the public with an idea of self-importance and consequence, and from thence to acquire or preserve popularity.

In all these respects, and in many others, how different is the conduct of Dr. Lettsom from that of the Physician, to whom *he wishes to be thought* the successor, and whose memory is deservedly esteemed. His charity was of the most private kind, and the public did not become familiar with his name by means of the daily papers, or by his busy interference in Dispensary elections.—But it would be foreign to the subject, and at any rate, perhaps, improper in this place to draw any further comparison. I shall only observe, therefore, that an accurate statement of facts, with the order in which they occurred, has been my principal object.—I leave it to the candid reader to determine the degree of credit which is due to them, and to form his own conclusions.

R E P R E S E N T A T I O N

O F

Dr. Lettsom's Conduct, &c.

IN the beginning of August last I was informed by a friend that Dr. Rogers had expressed his intention of resigning his office of Physician to the Finsbury Dispensary, and that a vacancy would soon be declared—I immediately resolved to offer myself a Candidate to succeed him; and, as soon as I found, from different officers of the charity, that it might be done with propriety, I entered upon the canvass with earnestness and activity. Finding that Dr. Lettsom was one of the Vice Presidents; suspecting that he was known to many of the subscribers, and being aware of his desire of rendering himself *conspicuous on such occasions*, I made the earliest application to him for his vote and interest, to which I received the following reply: “That it was the first information he had received on the subject; that he

had a good opinion of me, and thought me a proper person for such a situation ; that he had every reason to think he should vote for me, but would not absolutely promise to do so ; that he could foresee no opposition ; believed I should have to go quietly over the ground, and had very little doubt of my success. *With regard to his INTEREST, he expressly observed, that it was not his intention to exert it on such an occasion ; for that on a former election he had reason to think the governors were displeased with the claim which he had made upon them, in consequence of his having subscribed largely to the charity, and that he had therefore determined in future not to interfere."*

In this way the interview might have ended, had I not suggested, upon his questioning me whether any one was likely to start as my opponent, the probability of Dr. Meyer's becoming a Candidate. Of this Dr. Lettsom seemed doubtful, but added, that if he should offer himself, being under a promise to him, he must give him his *vote* in preference to me. He did not, however, in the remotest manner possible, give me reason to suppose, that he would come forward actively in his behalf ; indeed, such a declaration would have been so totally incompatible with what he had just before asserted, that had it been made, I could not have failed immediately to have offered my remarks on so glaring an inconsistency. I rested satisfied therefore,

fore, that although he might *vote* against me, it would only be the vote of one person; and pleased myself with having made some progress, by ascertaining, that his *interest* at all events would not be exerted to my disadvantage. So perfectly persuaded was I of this, that being asked on the two first days of my canvass by several of the subscribers, whether I was *favoured by Dr. Lettsom*, I replied, that he had expressed his satisfaction at my offering myself a Candidate; and had given me some reason to expect his vote, if a gentleman to whom he had promised it did not appear; but that at any rate he had said he *would not interfere in the election*, and consequently that there was little to apprehend from any restraint that he might otherwise lay on those with whom he was privately acquainted, or who would wish to be guided by his opinion. As a further proof of the same thing, I observed to them, that Dr. Lettsom had pointed out to me different persons in the Charity to whom he advised me to apply as speedily as possible, in order not only to secure their votes, but, from their respectability, to lay the foundation of many others that would naturally follow them. He particularly mentioned the Reverend Mr. Sellon and his family, whose interest I fortunately obtained at an early period, and which has proved highly beneficial to me.

Several other persons were also named by him as proper objects of immediate application, but whom I do not now recollect. These are circumstances so striking, that to any man of common sense they must appear a strong confirmation of my assertion, that he declared he would not interfere: how was it, indeed, possible to conceive, after such professions, that he could even have had a wish for the success of another? for, had he intended to exert his interest for Dr. Meyer, or any other person, why should he put me on a plan which would have a great tendency to defeat himself?

After this interview I requested a friend, who appeared to have some influence with Dr. Lettsom, to apply to him in my behalf for his vote; which gentleman the next day kindly informed me that he had seen him, and that he had given him reason to understand that Dr. Meyer *had refused being a Candidate*, but that, as he thought *a contest would prove beneficial to the charity*, he still declined the positive promise of his vote. The next afternoon I received the following letter from Dr. Lettsom, inclosing another from Dr. Meyer to him.

“ DEAR DOCTOR,

“ I mentioned, when I saw thee, that I
 “ should not oppose thy interest, provided Dr.
 “ Meyer did not offer, to whom I had long
 “ promised

“ promised my services. This day, and not
 “ before, I received the inclosed, in which he
 “ calls upon me to fulfil my promises.

“ I am, &c.

August 3d, 1786.

“ J. C. LETTSOM.”

With regard to Dr Meyer's letter, to which he refers, I immediately returned it without taking a copy; indeed, I thought it at the time an indelicate thing in Dr. Lettsom to send it to me. It was chiefly for the purpose of declaring his intention of becoming a candidate, claiming, in strong terms, the promise of Dr. Lettsom's services. This the Doctor conceived would be at least some apology for the steps he was about to take; for he must have been conscious that there would be an inconsistency in his conduct, and that I should take notice of it. If he had really promised his services to Dr. Meyer on any occasion of this kind, which must have been the case from the claim which was made upon him, was it not natural that he should apprise me of it fully when I first mentioned the vacancy to him? Unless he was very luke-warm in his friendship, or his memory was uncommonly defective, how is it possible, under such circumstances, that Dr. Meyer could for a moment escape his recollection. If he was really in his remembrance at the time that he was flattering me with a prospect

spect of success, he was guilty of a most unwarrantable deception, because he was encouraging me in the pursuit, merely with a view to a contest, in which he would at last have an opportunity of displaying a triumph. Why did he not, more especially upon my mentioning Dr. Meyer's name, tell me openly, that he should probably be induced, contrary to his inclination and former assertion, publicly to interfere in his behalf? No such expression escaped him; for I well recollect, that he only said he should in that case give him his *vote*. Why did he not, in the letter which I have inserted, make some declaration of his intention to interfere publicly, instead of using the vague and artful term of *services*? Could any one, at that time however, after his declaration not to interfere, put any other construction on the word *services*, than that of his making use of private recommendations to his particular friends? I must confess notwithstanding, that I had my suspicions. Several instances of Dr. Lettsom's inconsistency had been mentioned to me, and I therefore thought proper, in my answer to his letter, to remind him of the conversation which had so recently passed between us; from which I flattered myself, or had reason to hope, that he would not take an active part against me, though there was now no prospect of my having his vote.

In a few days afterwards, I found that there was a public recommendatory-letter in circulation, of which the following is an exact copy.

“ To the Governors of the Finsbury-Dispensary.

“ AS I have been with your excellent Institution, from its Commencement and throughout its Progress, to the present Moment, endeavouring to promote its Success, I cannot but feel a Solicitude in whatever may interest its future Prosperity.

“ Impressed with a Sense of the important Duties of a Physician, I recommend Dr. John Meyer, of Throgmorton-street: He is a Member of the Royal College of Physicians; and, were any other Recommendation of his Abilities necessary, my long personal Acquaintance with him entitles me to add, that his uncommon Erudition and his medical Knowledge equally render him qualified for that important Office.

“ Sambrook-Court, Basinghall-Street,

“ August 4, 1786.

J. C. LETTSOM.”

An application so very pointed, independent of Dr. Lettsom's declaration, that he would not interfere, could only have been justified, from him or any other individual, by a conviction that

that I was an improper person for the situation; but as he had previously said, and has been since pleased to say, that he believed me fully qualified, it was consequently improper, if not unjust; for if both the candidates, on an occasion of this nature, were equal to the situation which they solicited, the Charity could not suffer in either case.—Hence, as far as its *prosperity* was concerned, for which Dr. Lettsom *expresses his solicitude*, it was a matter of indifference which of them should prove successful.

The appearance of this recommendatory letter, induced me to call upon its author, in order to make him acquainted with my sentiments, and in particular to inform him, that I thought he had deceived me; that he had acted contrary to his declaration, and that, as I had given my friends, and several of the subscribers to the Dispensary, reason to think that he was not to interfere; I considered myself called upon, both for their satisfaction, and in my own justification, publicly to declare his conduct, and more especially, that if through his interference I should lose the election, I would then make known his want of candour in print. I meant at that time, merely in form of a short Advertisement, to have stated that my friends and myself had been put to a good deal of unnecessary trouble, by the uncandid and inconsistent conduct of Dr. Lettsom. The circumstances, however, which have since occurred,
are

are so numerous and striking, and several of them have been so capitally displayed in public, that nothing short of a Pamphlet could have conveyed an adequate idea of their *merit*, or have served, in a sufficient degree, to transmit them as a *brilliant example* to posterity.—Let us then, in the first place, take a view of the reception with which I was honoured; for any interview from one so much occupied as the Doctor frequently *appears* to be, must, undoubtedly, be esteemed an honour.

The threat, as he termed it, of making known his conduct, seemed at first to irritate him, and he hastily insinuated, that it would rather have the effect of increasing, than of diminishing his exertions.—He observed, that it had been remarked by the late Dr. Fothergill, that he was pen-proof; said, that he should make no public reply; and added, that he had been pretty well accustomed to attacks of that nature; one of the last of which was very abusive. To this I replied, that it was not my intention to deal in abuse; that I meant to rest the matter on simple facts, and more particularly on his declaration, that he would not interfere; which I repeated to him in his own words, urging the inconsistency of his conduct, and observing, that I thought it candid to state to him, as early as possible, the steps which I had resolved to take, in case I should lose the election.—He now became more cool, and, as

if sensible of the force of what I had alleged, attempted to justify himself by saying, that he had not thus publicly interfered till an old friend of Dr. Meyer had deserted him, meaning a gentleman much respected in his profession, who has always entertained a friendship for Dr. Meyer, as well as a high opinion of his abilities, but who having recommended me to such of his friends as were subscribers several days before he heard of Dr. Meyer's intentions, could not, although he regretted the contest, with propriety withdraw his assistance. At another instant Dr. Lettsom endeavoured to justify his conduct on the principle of a warmth of friendship for Dr. Meyer, and of his having formerly promised him his services; but it is no difficult matter to account for his conduct on very different motives. We sometimes meet with men extremely desirous of conferring favours with a view of acquiring power and consequence; and this principle of vanity is so great with some, that they are always seeking out for objects on whom they may bestow their patronage. If not otherwise interested, they occasionally prefer men who are respectable, and even superior to themselves in useful knowledge; but they do this not so much with the idea of rewarding merit and abilities, as with the expectation of increasing their own importance, and this importance they conceive to be greater, in proportion to the difficulties which they overcome in effecting their

their purpose. In this point of view I consider Dr. Lettsom's late interference. An opposition, or contest, was necessary to complete his triumph, and this he effectually secured, by allowing me to make so great a progress before he exhibited himself, that I could not with propriety relinquish the pursuit. I am very ready to admit, that Dr. Meyer was intitled, in preference to me, to Dr. Lettsom's vote, and such private services as he could render him among his friends. So little acquainted was I, indeed, with Dr. Lettsom, that I had no claim upon him even for his vote; and, had he openly declared at the first interview that he should use all his exertions for Dr. Meyer, it is impossible that I could have been displeased with him. It is highly probable that I should have declined in that case offering myself a Candidate, as I have been always averse to the fatigue and expence of a contested election.

But to proceed with the interview, at which a gentleman well acquainted with Dr. Lettsom, and friendly to me, was present. The displeasure occasioned by my declaration of making known his conduct appeared in a short time to have totally subsided; and, whether with a view, at the instant of averting future inconvenience, or from a genuine *mildness* and *philanthropy of soul*, it may be difficult to determine, but the Doctor was pleased to say many civil things; paid me several compliments; offered to declare to the Committee of the Dispensary, that he

thought me fully capable of the situation ; and, with a persuasive eloquence, *peculiar to himself*, wished me to be satisfied with the idea of losing the election ; urging at the same time, with a GREATNESS of soul, his disposition of serving me on any other occasion. Such, in fact, was his interest, according to his own account, that there could be little doubt of my succeeding to the first vacant dispensary. As a word of comfort, he also hinted, that there were several dispensaries preferable to the *Finsbury*, though with only *one-half the salary*. I listened with attention, but expressed my determination of pursuing the present object. At the same time I could not help being surprised at the presumption of an individual, however great his influence, in supposing that he could have the public so much at his command as only to speak the word and be obeyed. He was further heard to say during the canvass, that he had nothing to allege against me in my profession, but was displeased at my continuing to oppose his wishes at the Finsbury Dispensary, where he had always taken the *lead* ; that if I would submit for the present, he would make a point of bringing me in at one of the others. I have good reason, indeed, to believe, that the Doctor frequently speaks of these institutions as being totally subservient to his wishes and commands. Dr. Lettsom, at length before the interview, ended, condescended more than once, placidly, to inquire, “ what would satisfy me ? ”

I told

I told him that it was then too late to withdraw his letter, as it had circulated pretty generally, but that I thought I had a right to expect he would take no further steps against me, and that in particular, having been informed of his intentions of promoting a plan for the raising a large sum of money to make new subscribers, I trusted he would give up those ideas, and submit the event to the fair and regular choice of the old subscribers.

He laughed at the idea of the large sum of money ; confessed that he had said in a joking way to a friend of mine, that one thousand pounds would be sported, but that it was without meaning, and concluded with observing, that *there was then a paper on the table, to which he pointed*, submitting to him a proposal for making a number of new votes, but which could not be done without his assenting to something which was required of him ; *and this he had refused* ; he added, that he had made no *personal applications* ; had scarcely seen Dr. Meyer since the publication of the letter ; and that, if he was *even disposed to offer him the assistance of his purse, he would not accept of it*. In short, before we parted, the Doctor was so civil to me, that I flattered myself my interview had been productive of the desired effect, and that he would not further interfere. The appearances were on the whole so favourable, and the gentleman who accompanied me was so much

much of that opinion, that I was induced to hasten to the different printers, in order to correct an expression in one of my advertisements, which was rather severe, and which, if it had been permitted to continue, might have proved an excuse for the sudden revolution of conduct which succeeded it. In a day or two afterwards I was justified in restoring that expression, for such was Dr. Lettsom's duplicity, that, notwithstanding all his civility, his apparent indifference with regard to Dr. Meyer, and his question, "What would satisfy me?" more than once repeated, he expressed himself much displeased, on the succeeding day, at my having threatened him, as he termed it, in his own house; said, that he was determined, in consequence of it, to take the most active part against me, and intreated several persons to assist him in the effectual accomplishment of his design.—Five hundred pounds at one time, a thousand at another, and, lastly, the sum of three thousand, were all speedily boasted as being in readiness, if required.

So intent was Dr. Lettsom, at this period, upon the object; and, as it would seem, so determined to punish the offence, which upon *further reflection* he found I had committed, that he attended at the various committees for regulating Dr. Meyer's election. He was also heard frequently to say, during the canvass, that he would at all events make certain of the election,

election, however great the expence; and with that *modest forbearance*, which is his peculiar characteristic, exulted to some of the old Governors, who were *my friends*, in this commanding superiority. Inspired with the ideas of victory, he thought of little more than the field of battle, and occasionally entertained his friends, I am told, by comparing his money to a numerous and well equipped regiment of soldiers, himself being the general. To what a pitch must his imagination have been heated, when he fancied himself ornamented in the martial dress, ready to take the field; *one species of vanity*, to which he had before been an entire stranger! To his great credit, however, be it spoken, his charity soon got the better of his heroism, and, conceiving it dishonourable (no man being nicer in points of honour than the Doctor) to attack me with a body of troops, superior in number and discipline to mine, thought it more equitable, considering my profession, to exert his medical, rather than his martial skill. He therefore, it is said, humorously compared his guineas to *golden pills*, 1300 of which he prescribed for me, as the first dose on the day of election, *to be occasionally repeated, till the effects were fully produced*. I am sorry, in this way, to interrupt the principal circumstances of my narration, but these remarks of the Doctor's, if they were really made by him, appear to constitute so good a specimen of the slight smattering

tering of wit which forms a part of his character, that I could not, in justice to him, suppress them. Besides, they may afford some little relief, previous to the attention, which will be required in the more serious relation of what is to follow.

Notwithstanding the different reports of the large sums of money to be employed against me, I persevered in my applications to the different subscribers, and still flattered myself with some prospect of success, especially as many of my friends, though they highly disapproved of the principle which admitted it, had declared their intentions of becoming subscribers, if necessary, on the day of election to serve me.

About a fortnight previous to the election, several persons, who had a good opinion both of Dr. Meyer and myself, proposed a plan, which they thought would not only prove beneficial to the institution, but satisfactory to the candidates and their friends: this plan was, that an attempt should be made, if the Governors at large acquiesced in the propriety of the measure, to elect both. The terms suggested were the following: That as the salary was far from being the principal inducement, it should be divided between the two, and thus the expence of the charity remain as if one only were elected: that in consequence of such indulgence, the friends of the Candidates should be answerable for three or four hundred new subscribers, which would tend very much to the advancement

ment of the institution, and would effectually remove any objections on the part of those Governors, who were desirous of an accession of money from the usual course of the election. It was observed, that although some had flattered themselves that 600 l. or 800 l. would be gained by the contest, yet, that 300 l. or 400 l. with the preservation of harmony and unanimity, would be preferable; that the business would be better done, and would be much easier to the Physicians themselves. For my own part, I readily approved of the idea, and it seemed agreeable to such of my friends also as had an opportunity of hearing it. I was not a little surprised when I found, that upon its being stated to Dr. Lettsom, he had totally rejected it. Had it been carried into execution, the dissensions which have since taken place would have been avoided, and there would have been such a co-operation of interests as might have proved highly conducive to the welfare and permanency of the institution.

But this did not accord with the consequence of Dr. Lettsom. Under such circumstances he would have gained no victory. He would not have appeared in the elevated situation of Vice-president at a contested election. He could not have exhibited his *bundle of bank-notes*, or his *banker's check-book*. He would have lost his *lead* in the Dispensary. He therefore trampled on peace to gratify his vanity, and

from too great an anxiety and rashness in extending his conquests, has probably laid the foundation of future disobedience in all his *territories* *.

There were many of the subscribers of the Finsbury Dispensary, indeed, who, on the first appearance of Dr. Lettsom's letter of recommendation, were sufficiently aware of his motives; they declared, with an independency of spirit, worthy of imitation, that they would not permit him to dictate to them; and some, to whom he was quite unknown, considered it so great an insult, that he should presume to nominate their Physician, that although otherwise disposed to serve Dr. Meyer, they determined on this account to oppose him.

The eyes of all, it is to be hoped, will now be so far opened, that in every future election they will exercise their own judgment, and not submissively bend to the inclinations of an *individual*; for if his numerous contributions to the Dispensaries be really connected with charitable motives, he ought, in strict propriety, to be more cautious in presuming upon them, and should by no means expect a return by having the office of Physician or Surgeon *at his disposal*.

When money is *publicly lavished, by a man in a professional situation*, his motives are always to be suspected. Real charity and benevolence

* By the Doctor's territories I mean the various dispensaries at which he has exhibited himself in the election of officers, &c.

demand no other return than the satisfaction of the inward man. They are always silent, and delight not in *the parade of patronage*. *Their delicacy* is shocked by the applause of the multitude, and *their very existence* totally extinguished by the *puffs* of a News-paper.

These reflections naturally lead to a consideration of Dr. Lettsom's conduct on the DAY OF ELECTION, which will form the most interesting part of this little narrative. Most of the facts hitherto mentioned rest on the authority of individuals. They can only derive weight, or have their due influence, in proportion to the credit which different persons may be disposed to annex to the representations of myself, and a few others. It is possible, therefore, that assertions may be made with a view either to disprove them, or weaken their force.— But it is very different with the scene which will now open. This was a public exhibition. It excited an attention from its novelty, which only served to heighten the disgust, occasioned by the representation, and rendered the impression so forcible, that it can never be totally obliterated. Never before did an individual exhibit himself in such a variety of characters, obviously incompatible with each other.

Dr. Lettsom, by his avowed opposition to me, and by his declaration to different persons, that he was determined, by the force of

money, to carry his point, was highly improper for any situation in which impartiality and strict justice, with regard to me, were required. He notwithstanding exhibited himself in the character of *judge*, by filling the chair at the election; a measure so very unprecedented, and shockingly indelicate, that most of those who were present expressed their surprise, and many immediately resolved carefully to watch his proceedings. Never did the Doctor, in his exertions for popularity, so strangely mistake his ground! The parties concerned are invariably excluded, if not by their own feelings, by the suggestions of others, from all situations in which an impartial decision is required; and where could such a decision be more necessary than from the chairman or president of a contested election? It seemed strange, therefore, that Dr. Lettsom, although a Vice President, should be permitted to take the chair, when the Treasurer of the Dispensary, and various others, not only of character, but of moderate sentiments, were present.—A few persons, indeed, conceived that he meant by his *moderation* and *impartiality* to atone for his former conduct; but we shall soon find to what an extraordinary pitch he aggravated it. Behold him then seated in the chair, in the presence of a respectable number of the subscribers to the Dispensary, with his son, a boy, apparently of twelve or thirteen, at his

his elbow, (*excellent lesson of humility!*) ready to assist him in the skilful management of the means, by which he was to obtain success.

It was not sufficient for Dr. Lettsom that he should be a *witness* to the overthrow: he was determined to be the *principal agent*, by which he unfortunately degraded himself from the character of Judge, to one little short of that of Executioner; for without the slightest civility or respect to the numerous subscribers who were waiting to give their votes, and several of whom were immediately obliged to go into the country, or were called away by particular business: I say, without regarding these, totally unmindful of decency and good order, and in direct violation of the rules prescribed on such occasions, he speedily occupied the balloting glass, and, with an inconceivable dexterity, proceeded to call over a list of *proxies*, for each of which he gave a vote; but which proxies had neither been paid for, nor the receipt for the money, according to the usual custom, produced.

The *impartial* President little suspected that this *equitable method* of proceeding would have been called in question. It was enough for him that a guinea should afterwards be paid for each of the names at his leisure; but however convenient or ingenious his plan might have proved, it was so unprecedented, that several persons objected to it, and insisted that a receipt should be produced with each of the new proxies, before

before any of them could be considered as votes. The simple form of objection, or disapprobation, was inadequate however, to the effect. An act of violence only could restore things to their proper channel. A gentleman, whose conduct was highly applauded on that occasion, was in fact only able to intercept the communication between the President's *band* and *the glass*, by forcibly placing his hat over the latter. The Doctor, provoked at any measure which seemed levelled at the *dignity of his purse*, gave strong indications of passion and displeasure; and drawing from his side-pocket a bundle of Bank-notes, to the amount, it is believed, of 2000*l.* *dashed them on the table*, in the most insulting manner, observing, that if they should not prove sufficient, his *Banker's Check-book* was ready to supply the deficiency *. He haughtily

* Some of my readers may be anxious to know what portion of the 2000*l.* was *charitably* deposited by the Doctor in the fund of the Dispensary. From the opening to the close of the ballot, independent of those who had subscribed from time to time from the declaration of the vacancy, more than 500 guineas were received for votes, in favour of Dr. Meyer, the greatest part of which, it may be at first supposed, from the *grand exhibition* by Dr. Lettsom, was furnished by him. It is believed, however, that the part which he contributed was exceedingly trifling, (I understand not above a few pounds,) and that Dr. Meyer was himself at no small expence; for which I am sorry, and should have been happy if any explanation on my part, or that of my friends, could have been made with propriety, so as to have prevented it.

called

called upon the spectators to remember that he, with a few others, had founded the institution, and wished they would be unanimous in one cause, which he called the *cause of charity*. This would not satisfy them. They thought themselves called upon to revenge so great an insult, and the whole became a scene of uproar and confusion: some of the friends even of Dr. Meyer, joined in the cry of *shame*.—The tumult, however, at length subsided, without any of those rash acts of personal violence, which are liable to occur on such occasions, but which are always best avoided.

The *persevering* Doctor, regardless of these public marks of censure and contempt, and losing sight of every thing but the *prize in view*, seemed rooted to the spot, and continued in his *dignified situation*. What an admirable display of fortitude!—Where shall we find the man who would have maintained his ground so *nobly*?

My readers may easily anticipate the event of the election. To be brief, the *charitable* Doctor, however much he might lose *himself*, gained *his point*, and happily, without the assistance of his Banker's Check-book; for my friends, at the sight of the 2000*l.* although convinced that the Doctor produced it more *in terrorem*, than with any idea of bringing it into real use; yet being sufficiently aware, that instigated by pride, he would have exhausted his
whole

whole fund rather than have been defeated in his end, thought it much better to *oblige him at an easy rate*, than by imprudently lavishing the little stock they had in hand, make his triumph still greater.

In fine, my friends and myself were not in the least surprised to find, at the close of the ballot, that there appeared for Dr. Meyer 885 votes—for myself 310, of which 294 were old subscribers, 20 new ones only having been made in my favour, and four of these, through accident, not having voted.

So fully satisfied were we with our conduct, and with the conviction that the majority of old subscribers was in my favour*, that never, perhaps, was the loss of an election less felt by the unsuccessful candidate or his friends.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Lettsom, conscious of the striking impropriety of his conduct in his capacity of chairman, attempted to apologize, and expressed a wish that the whole of the business should be forgotten.—Being aware, however, that the affair would be publicly talked of; although I was satisfied of the approbation of my more intimate friends, yet conceiving that those less acquainted with me would be backward in believing that any man,

* By examining the books of the Secretary, in which the names of the *old Governors*, who voted, were marked, they were found to amount to 526, 294 of which having been in my favour, gave me a majority of 62.

after the professions which he had made to me, could be capable of such a conduct, I made known my resolution, that the various circumstances relating to the election should not be passed over in silence, but that I would make the whole of them public in print.—One of my friends immediately requested that Dr. Lettsom would inform the meeting, whether he had not said to me, that he would not publicly interfere, as he had formerly displeased the Governors by doing so? Upon his remaining silent, I related the different proceedings in as few words as possible, in order to give him an opportunity, before he quitted the chair, of defending himself.

He neither denied nor explained the charges of duplicity, which I alleged against him, although an answer to them was repeatedly called for, and had the *satisfaction* at length of leaving the room, amidst the murmurs and most striking marks of censure and disapprobation of many that were present.—

Such has been the conduct of Dr. Lettsom; in the representation of which, I can safely declare, that there has been no exaggeration, nor wilful intention of exceeding the bounds of strict truth and propriety. Having throughout the whole been so much on my guard, as to take down in writing, an accurate account of most of the circumstances, immediately after the time that

they occurred, I can assert them with greater confidence than if I had trusted to memory. Relying on the justice of my cause, I shall cheerfully submit it to every candid and unprejudiced mind; and should Dr. Lettsom condescend to offer any thing to the public in his justification, shall be ready, if necessary, to enter into any further discussion or explanation of the subject.

R E M A R K S
O N T H E
E S T A B L I S H M E N T
O F T H E

New Finsbury Dispensary,

I N

Saint John-street, Clerkenwell.

THE eyes of the subscribers of the Finsbury Dispensary having been fully opened by the very glaring abuse to which most institutions of this nature are liable in the election of officers, evinced by the recent example which has been mentioned, a select number of them, assisted by some other gentlemen of respectable character, immediately resolved to institute a New Dispensary, with such laws and regulations as would effectually remove all the evils complained of. A plan of this kind has accordingly been carried into execution, and the Dispensary already opened for the relief of the poor. The encouragement which it has met with has been so great as to surpass the most sanguine expectations of its first promoters, and, if a judgment may be formed from the perseverance, abilities, and connexions of many of the gentlemen who have interested themselves in its

success, there can be little doubt of its being flourishing and permanent.

It was proposed, and, indeed, intended, at one time, to fix it either in Holborn or Hatton-street, but it appeared on consideration more eligible to adopt a situation as near the center as possible of the different districts, at which patients are to be visited at their own habitations; and, as Islington and Holborn constituted the two extremes, it was thought that St. John's-street, Clerkenwell, would be the most convenient place; which has therefore been preferred. The title of the *New Finsbury Dispensary*, and its vicinity to the Finsbury Dispensary in Saint John's-square, have induced some of the gentlemen connected with the latter to suppose, that the new one has been instituted in direct opposition to the other, and with the expectation of its complete ruin. Such suspicions, I may venture to assert, are without foundation; for, although the first idea of the new establishment originated from the disgust at the conduct of Dr. Lettsom, and, although some of the subscribers of the old one have determined in future totally to support the new, which must at present, in some degree, weaken the resources of the former, and thus far imply an opposition, yet, there are others among the most zealous supporters of the new plan, who still mean to contribute to the old one, from the conviction, that the number of distressed objects is so great as to furnish

furnish employment, and full encouragement, for both. This will be more generally the case, should the old Dispensary follow the example set by the new one, of correcting the abuses before stated, in the election of officers, and in *guarding against the undue influence of individuals.*

As there are several of the subscribers to the old Dispensary, who, from the offices which they hold in it, and from other circumstances, must be much interested in its welfare, and to whom I feel myself particularly indebted for their friendly conduct, it gives me some concern that the new one, to which I have been appointed Physician, should excite so great an alarm among them, and that they should, in the letter to their subscribers, which has been hastily circulated, endeavour to impress them with the idea of a direct opposition, and of the most hostile measures. I must again declare, that the promoters of the New Institution are actuated by honourable and benevolent motives. They admit that the two Dispensaries may be so far considered in opposition, that the one, which is the most perfect, or best regulated, will, in all probability, be most generally preferred; but that, as the one will always have the opportunity of adopting any salutary regulation made by the other, a balance may be easily preserved, while the management is entrusted with proper persons. They are willing to allow, that they expect superior advantages from their new laws, especially

especially if these are not adopted by the other ; but they never intend to encourage any unfair or improper method of injuring the Old Dispensary ; and are very far from supposing, that the ruin of it is necessary to the establishment and success of their own. This Institution, from the uncommon support which it has already met with, they believe will be flourishing, whatever may be the condition of the other ; nay, if it should even be more liberally supported than before.

Whatever may be the event, there is one consideration, which must be satisfactory to all, that the poor, the object of both Institutions, cannot possibly be injured by the additional establishment ; for, if one only should maintain its ground, they will still derive the same advantages as before ; if both should succeed, the relief which they will experience must, of course, be more complete and extensive.

It would be no difficult matter to prove, that the greatest utility may arise from two Dispensaries in the same neighbourhood, provided it be populous, and that the number of labouring and indigent persons be great, which is certainly the case in the districts included by the two Dispensaries in question.

The persons who are chiefly entrusted with the management of the business will be thus rendered more vigilant ; œconomy will be more cautiously studied ; abuses will be no sooner committed than corrected, and the medical attendants

dants will be more active in the discharge of their duty. The torpor or lethargy, which is so frequently connected with the idea of security, and which is often productive of ruin, will be effectually obviated; and, if a propriety and moderation of conduct be preserved, the two Dispensaries may in time be mutually serviceable to each other. Instead therefore of any dislike or aversion to the new Institution, the friends of the old one should rather promote its interests, as their donations and subscriptions will be more cautiously and usefully applied than formerly; and, although there may be some degree of competition, yet, as we shall co-operate in a similar design, the good effects of which will be sensibly felt by the poor, it is to be hoped, that those sentiments of opposition, which have been so strongly inculcated, will be diminished or removed. It should be recollected also, that part of the resources of the new Dispensary will be derived from persons who, although charitably disposed, yet, from the distance at which they reside, would never probably have contributed to the old one, which is one reason, among many others, to prove that both Institutions may be well supported.

The promoters of Dispensaries in general contend, that they cannot exist without the money arising from the new subscribers, who are permitted to vote at the different elections. The friends of the New Finsbury Dispensary are of a contrary opinion. They wish to pre-
serve

serve *inviolable the right of election*, a principle which so strongly accords with the feelings of most men, that they have no doubt they will experience the most liberal and substantial support.

I cannot conclude this subject without expressing my warmest acknowledgments to the numerous friends, who have either already subscribed, or mean to contribute to the New Dispensary. As I am much interested in its prosperity, they cannot more effectually serve me than by continuing their exertions in adding to the number of subscribers.

Such persons as humanely devote a certain portion of their fortune to charitable purposes, may, *at whatever distance*, contribute with propriety to the present undertaking; for, as by the laws of the Dispensary, patients, wherever they reside, may, by a proper attendance, experience relief; and, as the most distant subscribers may appoint any friend to recommend distressed objects, they will have the satisfaction of reflecting, that their donations are as well disposed of as if they themselves were on the spot. My friends therefore, however distantly situated, may have an opportunity both of serving me, and of gratifying their humane dispositions, by assisting in the promotion of this useful Institution.